

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 01569 150628 Z

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6776

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COMUSK

S E C R E T SEOUL 1569

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, KS

SUBJECT: KOREAN MODERNIZATION PROGRAM STUDY

REF: STATE 034897

FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY' S GENERAL COMMENTS RE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM STUDY.

1. IN BROAD TERMS, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT STUDY SHOULD FOCUS ON MOST PRACTICAL AND EXPEDITIOUS APPROACH TO FULFILLING CURRENT MOD PLAN UNDERTAKINGS WITHIN 1975 TIMEFRAME.

2. IN ROKG VIEW, MOD PLAN IS ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN U. S. SECURITY COMMITMENT TO KOREA. WHILE RECOGNIZING OUR CONGRESSIONAL DIFFICULTIES, AND PROBABLY RESIGNED TO SOME STRETCHOUT, KOREANS HOPE AND EXPECT THAT MOD PLAN WILL BE FULFILLED.

3. WHILE A REVIEW AND REORDERING OF PRIORITIES SHOULD BE AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF STUDY, WE SHOULD ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT THE ROKG HAS ITS OWN VIEWS ON ITS OWN SECURITY NEEDS AND ITS OWN SETS OF GOVERNMENTAL PRIORITIES. THEY MAY WELL DIFFER FROM OURS, AND WE SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO UNILATERALLY REORDER KOREAN PRIORITIES.

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4. STUDY SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT "I" ELEMENT (" KINDS AND QUANTITIES LIST") IS THE ESSENTIAL BENCH MARK IN ASSESSING WHAT IS NEEDED FOR SUBSTANTIAL FULFILLMENT OF MOD PLAN. FY 1971-1975 " O& M" LEVELS PROJECTED IN ORIGIANL \$1.5 BILLION CEILING (\$500 MILLION IN " O& M") ARE NOT LONGER RELEVANT AND " O& M" PROBLEM SHOULD BE TREATED AS RELATED BUT DISTINCT ISSUE. OUR ECONOMIC STUDIES HERE CONFIRM OUR VIEW THAT ROKG CAN BEAR A MUCH GREATER DEFENSE BURDEN THAT IT HAS. THE WASHINGTON STUDY SHOULD RECOGNIZE THIS. IT SHOULD ALSO POINT OUT THAT ROKG OBVIOUSLY PREFERS THAT USG CONTINUE TO PAY " O" AND OTHER DEFENSE COSTS AND WILL USE A COMBINATION OF ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND MILITARY ARGUMENTS TO KEEP US DOING SO.

5. IN VIEW ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT OUR RECOMMENDATIONS RE MOD FULFILLMENT AND " O& M" TRANSFER ARE THE BEST AND MOST PRACTICAL APPROACH TO SUBSTANTIAL FULFILLMENT OF MOD PLAN OBJECTIVES. UNDER OUR RECOMMENDED APPROACH WE WOULD EFFECT SUBSTANTIAL FULFILLMENT OF " I" PORTION OF MOD PLAN WITHIN FY 75 TIMEFRAME WHILE OFFERING SUBSTANTIAL FMS CREDITS TO ROKG FOR REMAINING LOWER PRIORITY ITEMS. RECOMMENDATIONS ALSO ENVISAGED UP TO \$60 MILLION IN PUBLIC LAW TRANSFER OF EQUIPMENT. IF THIS IS NOT REALISTIC THAN SHORTFALL CAN BE MADE UP: A) IN ADDITIONAL FMS CREDITS; B) BY ATTRIBUTING TO MOD PLAN, FUNDS IN PROJECTED FY 76 GRANT ASSISTANCE LEVEL, NOW TENTATIVELY SET AT \$100 MILLION; OR C) A COMBINATION OF BOTH.

6. WOULD HOPE THAT STUDY WILL GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO, AND ENDORSE, EMBASSY/ COMUSK RECOMMENDATIONS ON MOD PLAN FULFILLMENT AND " O& M" TRANSFER (COMUSK 180619 Z DEC 72, SEOUL 6679). THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE ON THE BASIS OF OUR ASSESSMENTS OF POLITICAL REALITIES AND MILITARY REQUIREMENTS AS WELL AS THE INCREASING ABILITY OF ROKG TO BEAR ITS OWN DEFENSE COSTS.

7. SEPTELS CONTAIN ECONOMIC SUMMARY AND SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON STUDY OUTLINE CONTAINED REFTEL. UNDERHILL

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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